

In this essay I am going to talk about what I learned in the Backcountry. My name is Eduardo Jose Muñoz and I came from the Del Norte CCC Center.

My sponsors, Cameron and Dave, taught me a great deal about the work and, my crew taught me a great deal about myself. They all taught me that, in life, it isn't always about me but it's also about the other people around me. I had to help others as well as myself out here, and at the same time keep my temper cool, since we all lived together for five and a half months. It wasn't always easy to keep your cool out here. I mean, there were 21 of us out here in the beginning, but now there are only seventeen of us left. We lost four people, but at the same time, by losing those people, it brought us closer to one another. We all learned that to make it out here, we were going to have to help each other and depend on each other, possibly more than some of us have in our lives. I truly believe that we succeeded in this program because we all got along very well. We look at each other as a friend and, better yet, possibly as family. Our work has become by far greater than it was in the beginning. If we needed help we never hesitated to ask each other and that is what made us a strong crew. I have never had to count on people more in my life because we all knew that something could go wrong, but we stood together and always looked out for one another. This program has been, by far, one of the greatest experiences in my life. This program taught me to push myself harder than I ever had and it taught me to keep a clear mind. After doing everything that I have done back here, it makes me realize that I can do anything I want to in life. There are not that many people that have had a chance in their life to do something this great. The work got rough at times, but I knew I could keep going. The community time is what really counted out here because it gave me the chance to get to know some of the best people I've known and it's what brought us close to each other. I must say that the classes out here weren't always fun because we were all tired from work, but we still did them and made the best of them and, best of all, we had fun. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

-- Eddie Muñoz—Kings Canyon Crew, 2003